



## The Wellness Initiative Governor Carcieri's Agenda

### The Challenge

Many Rhode Island residents smoke, eat too much, or exercise too little—habits that can lead to preventable health problems like heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes, and also to unnecessary injuries. Such problems raise medical care costs, decrease workers' productivity, and inhibit learning for students in the classroom.

- 56% of adult Rhode Islanders are overweight or obese
- 22% of adults smoke
- 72% of adults do not eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day
- 51% of adults do not exercise regularly
- 25% of adults do not wear a seat belt regularly

Like many states, Rhode Island lacks a well-coordinated campaign to promote healthy habits and collect important data on residents' medical care utilization.

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### Our Goals

The Wellness Initiative will join public sector and private sector efforts to promote healthy lifestyles for all Rhode Islanders. The Initiative will raise awareness about the importance of good nutrition, adequate exercise, and seat belt use, and discourage smoking and other life-threatening habits, based on the goals outlined in the Rhode Island Department of Health's report *Healthy Rhode Islanders 2010*. Businesses and industry associations throughout the state will implement workplace policies that encourage walking, provide nutritious food choices, and promote healthy lifestyles.

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By 2010, we will:

- achieve the first "Well State" designation in the U.S. by the Wellness Councils of America (WELCOA), for having 20% of Rhode Island's workforce employed in WELCOA-certified "Well Workplaces"; and
- cut in half the number of Rhode Islanders with unhealthy and unsafe habits.

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## Our Agenda

Building on and partnering with existing programs and initiatives, both public and private, the Wellness Initiative will focus on near-term strategies in five major settings, as indicated in the table below.

The Rhode Island Department of Health and the Worksite Wellness Council of Rhode Island will be the major coordinators of these efforts.

Setting	Potential Strategies
Workplace	Promoting businesses' applications for "Well Workplace" certification; creating tax breaks for businesses so certified.
Schools	Promoting physical activity; decreasing "screen time"; increasing the availability of nutritious foods; promoting seat-belt use.
Health Insurers & Health Providers	Promoting payment incentives for health care providers to support age-appropriate prevention measures and for subscribers to support healthy behaviors.
Government Agencies	Conducting health promotion programs for state employees; increasing the availability of nutritious foods in State cafeterias and conferences.
Community-Based Organizations	Promoting physical activity in neighborhoods.